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The message of Martin Luther King Junior spoke of respect, freedom, equality, and dignity for all. He hoped change would come about and racial barriers would be broken without violence. However, today we see violence, contempt, and discrimination directed at all groups of people. One need not wonder why the world is in the state it's in because to many, Martin Luther King Junior Day is regarded as an excuse for a federal holiday. When merely thought of as a miniature vacation from the stress and tension at the office or an escape from drudging from class to class at school, King's dream is lost. His dream needs to be celebrated everyday by all people. If our lives were exemplary of his message, we wouldn't have to contemplate whether war is just or unjust. No one would need to pray for peace. It seems only in times of trouble, we recall the wise words of leaders like King. For all these reasons, I hope to keep the message of King alive through my actions.

By being cognizant of King's dream everyday, instead of one day a year, I spread his message at home and in my community. I take an active role in service groups, such as the Christian Service Club, Student Council, National Honor Society, and Peer Counseling. As a member and leader of these organizations, I have developed an appreciation for freedom of speech and respect for a diversity of opinions. These experiences have helped me grow socially, culturally, and spiritually and allowed me to acknowledge the contributions of every individual I encounter.

I feel responsible to set a good example for previous generations. By taking the time to nurture relationships with adults, I can demonstrate that I am accountable for my actions, reliable, self-motivated, and dedicated to causes I firmly believe in. It's important to be taken seriously and let others know adolescents do invest time in and are knowledgeable about other facets of life besides pop culture.

Younger generations are also not to be forgotten. They demonstrate an innocence from prejudice of race, religion, sex, or age. Their exuberance of life- to have fun, to learn, to be loved and to love- reinforces a lifelong theme we should all strive for on a daily basis. By committing time to those younger through Peer Counseling, babysitting, tutoring, and Church activities, I can not only set an example, but also emulate their youthful spirits. I keep in mind that when I speak or act, tiny eyes are watching and we become mirrors of each other.

Most importantly, I keep the faith. I believe in myself and my actions and trust that others' hearts will lead them in the right direction also. I cannot say I have never doubted myself or lost hope in others, but I have made an honest effort to keep the words, message, and dream of Martin Luther King Junior written on my heart, in my mind, and on my lips.